

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPC-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10 RSC-01

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 COME-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

DRC-01 /124 W

----- 014310

R 040300Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9142

USLO PEKING

UNCLAS HONG KONG 12986

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM ORIGINALLY SENT FROM AG OFFICER HONG KONG TO
USDA/FAS WASHDC ON DEC 28, 1973. NOW BEING REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO

QTE:

UNCLAS HONG KONG 12986

TOFAS 227

FROM AG OFFICER FOR G&F, COT, TOB, & S&TP DIVISIONS

SUBJECT: 1973: A RECORD YEAR FOR CHINA'S CROP PRODUCTION

1. RECENT PROVINCIAL REPORTS HAVE SUPPORTED EARLIER
ASSESSMENTS THAT CHINA'S GRAIN AND INDUSTRIAL CROP HARVESTS
THIS YEAR WOULD, ON THE WHOLE, BE EXCELLENT, CERTAINLY
CONSIDERABLY IMPROVED OVER 1972, AND, FOR SOME CROPS,
PROBABLY RECORD HARVESTS.

2. PEKING (HSINHUA DEC. 23, 1973) NOW CONFIRMS THAT
CHINA'S 1973 HARVESTS OF GRAIN, COTTON, HEMP AND JUTE,
SUGAR CROPS AND TOBACCO HAVE HIT QUOTE ALL-TIME HIGHS
UNQUOTE. GRAIN PRODUCTION REPORTEDLY EXCEEDED 1972'S
CLAIMED 250 MILLION METRIC TONS AND EXCEEDED 1972
PRODUCTION BY MORE THAN AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH
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SINCE 1948. (NOTE: RECENT STATEMENTS SET THAT RATE AT

4 PERCENT PER YEAR.)

3. ALTHOUGH NORTHERN CHINA AFFECTED BY PROLONGED DRY SPELL IN SPRING AND SOUTHERN CHINA BY EXCESSIVE RAINFALL UP TO EARLY SUMMER, INTENSIVE LABOR AND INCREASED MATERIAL INPUTS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OFFSETTING ADVERSE EFFECTS OF WEATHER. INCREASED INPUTS (COMPARED TO 1972) INCLUDE: 20 PERCENT MORE CHEMICAL FERTILIZER; 12 PERCENT MORE INSECTICIDES; INCREASED NUMBERS OF LARGE AND SMALL TRACTORS; 300,000 NEW PUMP WELLS FOR IRRIGATION; AND 1.4 MILLION BECTARES BROUGHT UNDER IRRIGATION. GRAIN PRODUCTION IN THE CENTRAL-OUTH, NORTHEAST, AND SOUTH-WEST REGIONS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY OUT-STANDING. THERE WERE DISAPPOINTMENTS IN EAST CHINA, WITH PROBABLY DECREASES THI YEAR IN CHECKIANG AND KIANGSI. THE NORTHWEST ALSO DID NOT APPEAR TO BE OUT-STANDING, WITH KANSU OUTPUT PROBABLY BELOW 1972. HOPEH HAD A RECORD HARVEST. ALL-TOLD, 14 OF CHINA'S 29 PROVINCE-LEVEL REGIONS AND QUOTE RECORD GRAIN HARVESTS UNQUOTE.

4. COMMENT: INsofar AS POSSIBLE, A WEIGHTING WAS MADE OF REPORTED RESULTS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL--CONSIDERING THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE-RANKING OF EACH PROVINCE'S AREA AKDER GRAIN. ACCOUNTING FOR ESTIMATED DIFFERENCES IN YIELDS, NORTH AND SOUTH, AND APPLYING OTHER ASSUMPTIONS, THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICE ESTIMATES 1973 PRODUCTION OF GRAIN (GRAIN, PULSES AND "DISCOUNTED" POTATOES) AT 7 PERCENT ABOVE 1972. IF ONE ACCEPTS A 1972 FIGURE OF 240 MILLION METRIC TONS. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT WISH AT THIS POINT TO ARGUE ABOUT LEVEL AND VALIDITY OF VARIOUS SERIES OF CHINA'S GRAIN PRODUCTION (I.E. WHETHER ACCEPT 240,246, 240,250-PLUS MILLION-TON LEVELS RECENTLY CLAIMED BY CHINESE OFFICIALS OR MORE CONSERVATIVE FAS UGD ERS ESTIMATES AT 220-230 MILLION-TON LEVELS), BUT DO WISH PRESENT OUR ESTIMATE OF PERCENTAGE-INCREASE FOR THIS YEAR.

5. CONCERNING THE OTHER OFFICIAL CLAIMS, WE SUGGEST

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FOLLOWING PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES AS BEST JUDGMENTS AT THIE TIME: COTTON, 2.2 MILLION METRIC TONS; SUGAR (REFINED BASIS) 2.0-2.5 MILLION METRIC TONS; AND FLUE-CURED TOBACCO, 600,000 METRIC TONS. CHAMPEAU UNQTE: OSBORN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, SUGAR, COTTON, TOBACCO, GRAINS, STOCKPILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974HONGK12986
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740162/aaaacgrf.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 FEB 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2002 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: 1973: A RECORD YEAR FOR CHINA'S CROP PRODUCTION
TAGS: EAGR, HK
To: STATE PEKING
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005